

SOME ESTIMATES OF THE SITUATION IN KOREA.

It is practically impossible to overstate the urgencies of the situation in Korea at present.—*Dr. John F. Goucher.*

Men and women rejoicing in God's word, bringing new ones all the time—where but on the mission field can you find men *clamoring* for Bibles and running to any one who can teach them, saying, "Tell me the meaning?"—*Rev. William Junkin (Methodist Episcopal Church, Chunju, Korea).*

During my recent tour in the Far East I formed the deep conviction that if the present work on the part of the coöperating missions in Korea is adequately sustained and enlarged in the immediate future Korea will be the first nation in the non-Christian world to become a Christian nation. I know of no mission field where larger or more substantial results have been secured, in proportion to the expenditure, than in Korea.—*John R. Mott.*

The need is so commanding and the eagerness for the knowledge of Christ so resistless that the missionaries are overwhelmed in the attempt to meet the flood tide of opportunity. My earnest study of the field makes

it clear to me that now is the strategic and crisis time in Korea. God's mighty Spirit is at work in such manifest and wondrous ways as to challenge his Church to rise quickly and gladly to discharge the blessed responsibility now facing us. May he give us grace to be true to him in answering this divine call!—*Rev. Howard Agnew Johnston, D.D. (Presbyterian), New York City, recently returned from a world trip.*

Three facts concerning religious conditions in Korea especially impressed Mr. W. T. Ellis, of the *Philadelphia Press*, who recently made a tour of the world: "(1) The receptivity of the Korean toward Christianity in eagerness and sincerity. (2) The thoroughness of the work of the missionary and the vigilance with which the Church membership is guarded. (3) The remarkable fact that the missionary has no time to go after people or to do any pioneer evangelistic work; the Church is propagating itself. Here in two decades has been created a native Church that is self-supporting and self-extending. I have no doubt that if the present missionary force in Korea were quadrupled or sextupled at once practically the whole nation would become Christian in less than a score of years."

No land interested me more than Korea. Korea was the goal of my desire. Seoul and Pyengyang held me almost spellbound. That Wednesday evening prayer meeting, with its 1,100 and more, I shall never forget. It was an uplift toward the uppermost heights. The character of the converts, the pressing into the kingdom, the immense harvests just crying out for gatherers, the economy of missions in that land, the thoroughness of the

work, the splendid promise just ahead, and the imperative of the present hour—Korea's crisis hour—tremendously impressed me. What magnificent returns would follow an investment in Korea just now! While on the field I learned the immense need of homes, of Christian schools and teachers, and of a large force of new missionaries to direct and to train.—*Rev. J. E. Kittridge, D.D. (Presbyterian), Rochester, N. Y.*

More than the appeals from the individual centers, the thing that most amazes us and fills our hearts with almost a dreadful wonder is the stirring and rising everywhere of all our people into a new life—a restless longing for new and better conditions, political, social, and moral. They have a new life working in them that takes a thousand forms of activity and leads to new complications. The way they are calling for education is tremendous—not calling for it, but going right after it. They will have it at any cost. The Church schools have become preëminently successful. Heathen magistrates are appointing Christian men as school commissioners to organize schools in many townships. Heathen children plead with their parents to let them become Christians so they can attend our schools.—*Rev. Herbert G. Blair, of Syen-chun, Korea, in the Presbyterian.*

“The lazy Korean,” “a decadent people,” “a nation of loafers,” “a moribund nation,” are some of the epithets applied to the people of the sometime “Hermit Nation;” and yet the marvelous progress of missionary work in that land, the activity of the Christians, their zeal for the cause, their self-sacrificing energy in Church work have challenged the attention of the whole world

until the eyes of all Christendom are riveted on that little, despised land. For almost ten years the story of the work in Korea has been entrancing. It has read almost like a fairy tale, and veritably it has seemed like a chapter from the Acts of the Apostles. Steadily and regularly, with an ever-increasing momentum, the work has been growing faster and faster, exceeding the brightest visions of the most optimistic of students of missionary work.—*Rev. H. G. Underwood, D.D. (Presbyterian), Seoul, Korea.*

During my tour in the East, few things have impressed me so much as the Christian movement in Korea. It is often referred to as “a revival,” and certainly there are many scenes which remind one of the Welsh revival. But the movement is more than a revival; it is a turning from heathenism to Christianity—not of a multitude following one another blindly, but of individual men and women convinced of sin and turning to Christ under the influence of the Spirit of God. Some have fallen to the ground and writhed in agony under the preaching of the gospel. It may be said that this is hysteria; but whatever it is, it marks the time of a profound change in manner of living and in personal character. Korean Christians will stand the test of our Lord: “By their fruits ye shall know them.”—*Rev. John H. Ritson, Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the Foreign Field.*

Whatever may be the result, the development of events in Korea will be watched by many with the keenest interest; and not the least interested will be those who see in this strange outpouring of the Spirit at Pyengyang

an analogous manifestation of that which preceded the great Wesleyan movement. You have only to read the journal of John Wesley and compare it with the account of the manifestation at Pyongyang to realize that the phenomena are very closely akin. There is in both cases an extraordinary manifestation of power; people are convinced of their sins by another force than reason, and the power that convinced gives them strength not only to overcome sin but to convince others. The Koreans who were at the original meetings have gone forth, like Wesley's converts, far and wide, preaching the faith. And, like Wesley's converts, their preaching has been wonderfully successful—so much so that there are not a few who say that it is through Korea that the light of Christianity will shine on the Far Eastern world.—*Rev. Lord William Gascoyne-Cecil (Church of England), in the London Times.*

Korea has passed through a grave political crisis. The people feel that all worldly sources of strength have failed them as a nation and only God is left. While adjusting themselves to the new, they need the comfort and consolation of our Christian faith. They feel the need of a newer and better manhood, and are turning to Christianity in order that they may find it. In connection with the troubles over the recent abdication of the former emperor, over 1,000 Koreans united with our Churches in Seoul. One prominent eunuch from the palace, who, with five others, joined our First Church, said: "Do not think this is a sudden thing with me. I have been contemplating it for some years. My life has been a wicked one, and I want to save my soul." Our chief difficulty is the lack of support from home.

We need men, and we need equipment. Remove this difficulty, and we will manage all others. There was a net gain during the Conference year recently closed of 21,000 conversions, and there is in progress the most remarkable revival ever witnessed in Eastern Asia. The Koreans increased in self-support last year over one hundred per cent, giving as much in the Conference year 1906-07 as the Missionary Society appropriated to Korea in 1900. All lines of work have been indescribably successful.—*Rev. George Heber Jones, Methodist Episcopal Mission, Seoul, Korea.*

At present Korea is a heartbroken nation; and what is of still greater significance, it is awaking to an appreciation both of its condition and the causes therefor. Travelers and students from other nations are saying and writing harsh things about Korean weakness and corruption, but their words are as soothing salve compared to the bitter things which Korean preachers, lecturers, and public men are saying to Korean audiences. The nation is being criticised and searched to its very heart, and with a humility and teachableness of which there are few parallels in history. The people are trying to learn their lessons and become strong. The eagerness with which they flock to the churches and to all modern schools and places where they can learn the lessons which the West and Christianity have to offer is marvelous. Time and again I have seen audiences at the Young Men's Christian Association enthusiastically encore pointed sermons on repentance and righteousness. Missionaries and Christian Koreans are the leading and most popular men in the country. This remarkable attitude of mind on the part of the nation might be con-

sidered as somewhat superficial were it not accompanied by a widespread study and purchase of the sacred Scriptures and by far-reaching and deep-searching spiritual revivals in which confessions of sin which are horrible in detail and extent are frequent. Already the Christian Church of Korea is said by many to be the largest, the best-organized, and the most powerful factor in the life of the nation.—*P. L. Gillett, Young Men's Christian Association Secretary at Seoul.*

Korea has been opened to the preaching of the gospel less than twenty-five years, and yet we may be within a decade of its evangelization. This is well worth while for the sake of the twelve million Koreans. Then, too, what can so hearten the Church everywhere as such an accomplishment? With quickened faith and renewed zeal the battle will be pressed in all lands. God has, by providences that can be traced for centuries, seemingly prepared the present opportunity. The temperament of the people, the overthrow of Buddhism more than five hundred years ago, the present political situation are all factors in making the entire people receptive to the gospel message. The Church is established in almost every section of the land. Its membership is loyal and zealous, and forms the basis for a general advance upon those as yet unreached. From among the membership, too, we will draw the force which, under proper direction, will carry the message to their own people. Since coming to New York I am rejoiced to find that the Boards which have work in Korea are awake to the situation, and purpose supplying at once what may be needed to complete the work of evangelization there. One of the smaller missions has been reënforced by six-

teen new workers during the past few months. Another Board is making a canvass now for twenty men and funds for additional equipment. Our Church must not hold back from doing its part. The field is limited, and can be sufficiently occupied without a large number of men or the use of a vast sum of money. I estimate that ten additional men and fifty thousand dollars will so equip our field that we will be able to meet our responsibility in giving the gospel to Korea. With the field so ripe and the call so promising, it would be shameful for us to fail to do that which is so feasible. I believe the Church will gladly meet her responsibility to Korea. It must be done *now*.—*J. L. Gerdine, Missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Korea.*

[8]